MINUTES
Open Spaces Committee Meeting

21st September 2026, 7:30pm, Parish Office, Merry Bells

In attendance: Chair Alison Sercombe, Councillors Andrew Cooper and Lucy Thomas

Present: Locum Clerk, Assistant Clerk

#24/26-27 **Apologies:** Toby Newman, Paul Willmott, John Wolstonholme and Anthony Shepherd

#25/26-27 **Declarations of Interest/Dispensations:** None.

#26/26-27 **Public Participation:** One member of the public was in attendance.

#27/26-27 **Minutes of the meeting of the 20th July 2026:** The minutes of the meeting of the 20th July 2026 were agreed and signed as a true record.

The Chair resolved to move the following item to this point in the meeting.

#30/26-27 **Accessibility at the Memorial Grounds:** A member of the public was in attendance to raise awareness to the issue that there is no disabled access through the Memorial Gardens and requested that the Council consider any way forward for improving this.

The Chair noted that the memorial ground is owned by Diocese. It is a closed burial ground; the Parish Council maintains it but has no ownership.

The Chair will raise this issue with the vicar to ask the Diocese what opportunities are available.

#28/26-27 **To receive an update on outstanding actions with no decision**

i. Storage shed: The Locum Clerk has put in the application to the planning authority which has been refused due to the need for additional plans. Cllr Newman is working with the Locum Clerk on this.
ii. Blocked pipework on footpath from Beech Road to Kelham Drive and uneven tarmac: There is no update from County Councillor Bearder. This item will be moved to Full Council agendas in future.
iii. Update on responsibility of St Mary's Close Alley roof: The Assistant Clerk has had no response from Taylor Wimpey and has passed this onto the Highways Engagement team.

iv. Contact the school regarding Smokefree Oxfordshire: The Locum Clerk has had an email from the school and is liaising with them.
v. Investigation of new sign at Church Road Recreation Ground village sign: The Locum Clerk has quotes for this which she is reviewing.
vi. Investigation of larger signs about dogs in the play areas: The Locum Clerk has quotes for this which she is reviewing.
vii. Tree surveys: These are in progress. The Locum Clerk is working on a grant for the tree works needed at Littleworth Road Field once the lease is obtained. A quote has been received for the removal of an ash tree by Farm Close Road. The Assistant Clerk is working through this. Other tree surveys are in progress.
viii. Memorial Gardens
    a. Solar lights: These are installed and functioning.
    b. Padlock of gates: The Committee believes the gate is in disrepair by Bell Lane and asked the Locum Clerk to work to have the gate removed for repair.
ix. Maintenance tasks:
    a. The Locum Clerk and Assistant Clerk are working to manage the maintenance tasks with the groundsmen. The groundsmen are currently unable to work together on the clearance of Ambrose Rise ditch. The Committee asked the Locum Clerk and Assistant Clerk to seek a quote to carry out this work.
    b. Weeding is being done around the village.
x. Allotments: The Assistant Clerk noted that Oxford Direct Services will carry out hedge reduction and removal at the allotments. The groundsmen will maintain this once the larger works have been carried out.
xi. Bus Shelter roofing repairs – King and Queen bus stop: The Assistant Clerk is working with the contractor on this.
xii. Confirm receipt of the Land Registry documentation for Wheatley Village Green: Done

#29/26-27 Play areas

i. Updates:
    a. Church Road Recreation Ground:
        i. Snagging: Homefront has not been in communication. The Committee is concerned with the lack of communication and customer service and resolved to seek legal advice to assist with solving the performance issues.

ii. Strimmer guard: The Committee is waiting to install this until issues are resolved.
iii. Rubber spikes: The Committee is waiting to install these until issues are resolved.
iv. Painting of teen shelter: One of the groundsmen has started the project but it has been left incomplete. The Locum Clerk and Assistant Clerk will work with him as to the project plan.
v. Table Tennis Net: Oxford Direct Services will quote for the repair of recent damage installing the replacement net.

#31/26-27 **Dog waste bin:** To consider a dog bag dispenser and bin at the Westfield Road entrance to a right of way: The Committee noted there is a bin in that location already and resolved not to supply bags at this stage so as to encourage owners to carry own bags.

#32/26-27 **Littleworth Road Playing Field:**

- The Committee considered holding a village competition to name the field.
- The Chair noted that the signing of the lease by all parties is in progress.
- The Chair will look to apply for a CIL grant in January.
- Flood alleviation scheme: The Littleworth Road Playing Field Working Group visited the site with the engineer from the District Council. The engineer will work on the design on a pump track and do the planning application.
- The Council will look to apply for a grant for the hard core of the track.
- They will review this at the Councillor Development Day.
- It was noted that the flood authority will do an annual check as well as checks after heavy rain for silt build up.

#33/26-27 **Village Map Project:** The Committee resolved for the Locum Clerk to research the cost and logistics of village maps using S106 public art funds.

It was noted that there are other public art projects which may be appropriate for Littleworth Road Playing Field and this can be considered once the project is further along and it is known what would be needed there.

#34/26-27 **Churchyard:** The Committee would like to identity which trees need attention and liaise with the vicar.

#35/26-27 **Correspondence:** None.

#36/26-27 **Matters for report:**

- Cllr Cooper reported there has been an issue with dogs off of leads in Cullum Road recreation ground.

#37/26-27 **Date of next meeting:** The date of the next meeting was confirmed as the as the 16th November 2026 at 7:30pm in the Parish Council office.